

MINUTES: Centerville Township Windmill Ordinance Committee, October 9, 2006

Present: Molly Hyde, Carolyn Weed, Travis Nelson, Gary Cook, Richard Light, Richard Kobetz, Dale Pleva, David Wurm

Absent: Joseph Czerniak, Mark Zemanek

Mrs. Hyde handed out a summary outline of the Shawano ordinance. Since the committee had discussed using that ordinance as a template because it was the most complete of all we have reviewed, the outline was prepared as a checklist. The committee may eliminate some of the items from the outline if they are deemed to be unnecessary. The committee is beginning to insert text into a document. The need to standardize a term was discussed. The committee agreed to a suggestion by Mr. Light to use the terms Wind Energy System for a single unit and Wind Energy Complex for two or more wind energy systems. This would imply a commonality and a single owner. The stated purpose in the ordinance will be based on the purpose that the committee gave to planning when we began our work.

Mr. Wurm stated that we were charged with creating regulations for commercial wind systems. Our committee cannot set regulations for private systems. A definition of private wind energy systems is necessary to establish under what conditions a system begins to be considered commercial and thus regulated by the ordinance. As long as a system is off-grid or net-metered it will be considered private. Consumers Power limits system size for net metering to 30kw. Our existing ordinance limits height on private windmills to 150ft.

Ms. Weed commented that there are gaps that will need to be filled. For instance, a court case documents that townships can collect fees and escrows. Does this need to be a general provision in the township ordinance? Or should it be listed in the wind turbine ordinance?

The committee began to review environmental regulations. Small wetlands within the township are not protected by state law, however may be protected by township zoning if the township chooses to do so. Erosion permits are necessary for commercial projects. Mr. Kobetz stated that a building special use permit could be issued to construct and an operating permit issued if compliance is demonstrated, for a specific period of time. It could be reviewed for complaints and if not made compliant, revoked. The US Fish and Wildlife Service have environmental guidelines for the placement of wind turbines. While they have no specific authority, they do have recommended guidelines. Ms. Weed also noted in developing environmental and application requirements that many areas may need to be reviewed by an attorney familiar with township and environmental law.

Discussion again returned to setbacks and total height. Setbacks from property lines, point boundaries, ratios of 4:1 from everything, and in relation to the topographical place where setback from were all brought up. Ms. Weed and Mrs. Hyde both believe the setback should be higher from the National Park.

Stray voltage was discussed. Mr. Pleva said it could be regulated. Double-shielded wires could minimize the possibility of stray voltage. Ms. Weed said that through the site plan review; a minimum code could be followed.

The committee also addressed the need to have someone to conduct our meetings to stay focused on our discussion and on schedule. Due to the frequent absences of our chairman, the committee has assigned Mr. Nelson with the task of conducting meetings.

The next meeting will be Oct. 23 at 7pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Molly Hyde